

Restricted Access Guidelines for Healthy Volunteer Research on Campus

1. Permission to bring healthy volunteers on to campus should only be granted for essential work that is time sensitive and cannot be conducted remotely. All other work including meetings should continue be conducted remotely via Teams etc.
2. Researchers must comply with all standard ethical and regulatory [requirements](#), ensuring always, in line with basic ethical principles, that the benefits from the research outweigh any risks. This document relates only to additional requirements associated with the COVID-19 pandemic.
3. National guidelines must always be adhered to. Currently guidelines have been issued by the Government ([Return to Work Safely Protocol](#)) and [HSE](#) but other national guidelines may be made available in due course.
4. Extra care must be taken when interacting with [vulnerable groups](#), including older people whether living at home or in residential care, subjects whose immune system is compromised, homeless people, international protection applicants, refugees etc. HSPC guidelines should be followed scrupulously and ethical approval will be required. Where it has already been secured, the application will need to be revisited in light of the current situation.
5. A letter of authorisation must be secured from the Head of College and VP Research and Innovation before commencing research which involves community interaction.
 - a. The following plans and assessments must be produced by the PI/supervisor in order to apply for a letter of authorisation.
 - i. A COVID-19 Response Plan detailing the provisions that will be implemented to ensure adherence with [COVID-19 control measures](#) and UCC's [Health and Safety Policy](#).
 - ii. A full risk assessment where required which accounts for both Covid-19 public health pandemic risks and for Occupational H&S Risks. Template to be found on the [RCBT webpage](#). Where RAs have already been completed, they need to be revised for COVID-19 public health pandemic risks before submission.
 - iii. Confirmation of ethical approval where required. Where ethical approval has been secured prior to the outbreak of COVID-19, the application may need to be amended to address issues raised by the current situation i.e. consent forms may need to be amended.
 - iv. A letter of assurance (for research at interface with society) must be completed by the PI/Supervisor on behalf of the group of researchers involved. Templates can be found on the [RCBT webpage](#).
 - b. All documentation should be submitted to the Head of College and VP Research and Innovation for review. Once approved, the name of the approved study, a list of researchers involved and a schedule of work can be sent to the HoS/Director of RICU who will issue a letter of authorisation.
 - c. Researchers must have a copy of the letter of authorisation with them at all times.
6. All PIs must consider the following in their compliance plan:

- a. All researchers involved in the study must follow the '[steps to follow before returning to work on campus](#)' including the [UCC Pre-return to work form](#) and [induction](#). It must also be clearly communicated to all researchers that **they need to stay at home if demonstrating symptoms of COVID-19**.
 - b. Research must comply with the building and local-unit COVID response plan at all times.
 - c. Clear electronic records must be kept of all volunteers entering a research facility to participate in the study. Their contact details should be stored in compliance with GDPR and details of their visit should be recorded including the time they entered and exited the building and the rooms that they visited.
 - d. **It must be clearly communicated to all volunteers that they need to stay at home if demonstrating symptoms of COVID-19**. Details of how this will be communicated should be included in the plan.
 - e. A schedule should be put in place that ensures that contact between volunteers and between volunteers and building staff is kept to an absolute minimum.
 - f. Volunteers should be asked to refrain from arriving before the scheduled time and to leave the research facility directly once the appointment is over.
 - g. Volunteers should be asked to attend the appointment on their own where at all possible.
 - h. Movement of volunteers in, around and out of the building should be mapped in advance to ensure minimal interaction with others.
 - i. Volunteers should be briefed in advance on the COVID-19 protocols in place within the research facility.
 - j. Where possible, social distancing should be adhered to during interaction with healthy volunteers. Where this is not possible, a plan should be put in place that adheres to the [Return to Work Safely Protocol](#) Guidelines (p. 13).
 - k. If PPE equipment is required due to the nature of the research activity, this needs to be acquired at local level. The PPE required should be outlined in the plan. Where additional PPE is not required, national guidelines should be adhered to.
 - l. Controls and protocols need to be put in place in relation to how any incidents that might occur would be managed.
 - m. As per the Government's Return to Work Safely Protocol, a response plan must be put in place for dealing with suspected cases of COVID-19 that might arise during the study.
7. When conducting research, researchers must comply with UCC's Health and Safety Policy as well as UCC guidelines on [social distancing](#) and [hygiene](#). In addition, they should also comply with the following:
- a. Sharing of equipment should be discouraged.
 - b. Any equipment being used by multiple people will be sanitised using suitable spray or wipes between uses and cleaned at least twice daily.
 - c. Should a suspected case of COVID-19 arise, researchers should follow HSE advice and immediately contact their line manager as well as the Student Health Department at 021 490 2311.

All protocols and compliance plans must adhere to UCC [Health and Safety Policy](#), Compliance Checklist / Access Protocol and the Government's [Return to Work Safely Protocol](#).